



# EPISCOPAL NEWS SERVICE

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# *news digest*

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98-2130D

## **Church's decision makers launch new triennium at joint meeting in Minneapolis**

(ENS) The decision-makers of the Episcopal Church—members of all the committees, commissions, boards and agencies that guide the church between General Conventions—descended on Minneapolis in mid-March to launch the new triennium.

The apprehension that was apparent when these interim bodies met together for the first time in the fall of 1995 seemed to dissipate as participants plowed into their agendas with energy and good humor. By the final plenary, it was obvious that some strong new bonds had been formed.

During plenary sessions, participants met and engaged in conversation with the new presiding bishop, Frank Griswold. He and House of Deputies President Pamela Chinnis moved among the individual meetings to get an overall feel for what was happening, visiting 15 of the 19 groups.

In assessing the meeting at the final plenary, Griswold reported that he observed "good energy moving in the groups" and was impressed with the lively interaction. Yet he warned against unrealistic enthusiasm, cautioning everyone to "be modest."

Chinnis said that this meeting had a "totally different spirit" than the first one, adding that she was struck by the "great diversity and the caliber of membership" in the groups that she and Griswold visited. She noted "a lot of networking and bonding."

After each group made a brief report, Chinnis said in her final comments, "Having listened to report after report filled with fresh ideas and new approaches to the challenges we face as a community, I am filled with hope for the next stage of our journey." In the past, she said, "we have been a leadership which did its work and formed its recommendations in isolated clusters of dedicated and hard-working people who had little idea what each other was up to, and little ability to build on each other's work or modify disparate elements into a coherent whole."

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98-2131D

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Chief consecrator and preacher for the service was the Most Rev. Frank T. Griswold, presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church and former colleague of the new bishop in the Diocese of Chicago. At the most solemn moment of the liturgy, 15 bishops joined Griswold to lay hands on Knudsen, making her a bishop in the historic succession going back to the apostolic era. She is the eighth woman ordained to the episcopate in this country since Barbara Harris was consecrated in 1989. Harris was one of Knudsen's co-consecrators, joined by Bishop Geralyn Wolf of Rhode Island. With the addition of Mary Adelia McLeod of Vermont, the Province of New England now numbers half of the female bishops in the American church.

Citing the Feast of the Annunciation, appointed for March 25 but transferred to Saturday for this occasion, Griswold called upon the familiar and challenging words of Mary as he reiterated the themes of obedience and faithfulness of Mary in response to the angel, and of all the baptized: "Here I am, the servant of the Lord . . . . Let it be to me, according to your word."

Knudsen, whom he described as "my dear friend, former colleague and always-wise counselor," is the third bishop consecrated by Griswold since his own investiture in January of this year. In addition to bishops Harris and Wolf, consecrators were Frederick B. Wolf, sixth bishop of Maine, and James R. Moodey, retired bishop of Ohio and visiting bishop of Maine for the past 18 months.

Gifts and symbols of the new office were presented to the bishop by her family, former colleagues in Chicago and the clergy of Maine. Her pastoral staff, given by the people of her new diocese, was designed and crafted from native wood by Stanley Neptune, a member of the Penobscot Tribe from Indian Island, Old Town, Maine. The bishop's husband Michael and their son, Daniel, carried forward the oblations of bread and wine for the Eucharist.

The service was videotaped and copies will be presented to each of the 68 congregations in the far-flung diocese. And the story with photos was available almost immediately after the service on the church's Web page.

The new bishop was formally welcomed by the Very Rev. Stephen Foote and seated in the cathedra (episcopal chair) at the Cathedral of St. Luke on Sunday, March 29.



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## **Lutheran bishops encourage wide discussion on new proposal for full communion**

(ENS) The bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) are encouraging wide discussion and response to a new proposal for full communion with the Episcopal Church which is being released April 9.

In a statement released after a March meeting of the Conference of Bishops, the bishops expressed a hope that "synods, congregations, conferences and church college and seminary faculties" would be involved in the process.

The revised Concordat of Agreement emerges from a writing team appointed in the wake of the ELCA's Churchwide Assembly vote last summer that fell six votes short of the two-thirds necessary to approve full communion.

The bishops said the discussion should center on how the proposal will serve the mission of the church, how it demonstrates a Lutheran understanding of the one office of a ministry of word and sacrament, and how it clarifies the role of bishops in the wider ministry of all baptized Christians and in relation to the historic episcopate.

Bishop H. George Anderson of the ELCA stressed the need for feedback from the spring meetings of ELCA synods. The writing team, he said, needs to know "suggested changes, what has been improved, the areas most critical, and work that still needs to be done.

"The goal of full communion cannot be seen just as a matter of outward relationship but as a quest for renewal within our own church," said the Rev. Daniel Martensen, director of ecumenical affairs for the ELCA. He pointed to an opportunity to "look for weaknesses and errors in our own church." He said that the church has a responsibility and a capability to meet the challenge of addressing "deep-rooted resistance" to ecumenical progress and to "redefining our understanding of ministry."

Bishop Mark S. Hanson of St. Paul said that the bishops "need to say something publicly about the tone of the debate we are inviting." He said that he sees, on both sides of the issue, "rigidity and walls going up and organizing in anticipation of a document nobody has yet seen." He expressed fears that the synod meetings would take straw votes on the revised proposals, "possibly derailing the ability of congregations to deal with it. I wish we could get the vast majority of the church to see that this is a new moment for conversation."

**(Note: ENS will issue a news report when the revised draft of the Concordat is released.)**



98-2133D

## Anglicans in Europe moving towards formation of separate province

(ENS) The bishops of the four Anglican jurisdictions in Europe, joined by clergy and lay representatives, met in Madrid in mid-February and took steps that could lead to the formation of an Anglican Province in Continental Europe.

"For 30 years the dilemma of parallel Anglican-Episcopal jurisdictions in Europe has been spasmodically addressed," said Bishop Jeffery Rowthorn of the Convocation of American Churches in Europe. This was the first time, he observed, that they had joined "in seeking a constructive resolution of that dilemma."

Rowthorn added, "A deep missionary concern informed all their deliberations as they recognized that, in a Europe often described as secular, millions of people are hungry for something to believe in, and are often responsive to lives of compassion, integrity and faith."

In addition to representatives of the convocation, participants included the Spanish Episcopal Reformed Church, the Lusitanian Catholic Apostolic Evangelical Church of Portugal and the Church of England's Diocese of Gibraltar.

In a February 21 statement the participants said that they had "come together to share our vision of a future life in closer fellowship." And they pledged to build towards "greater fellowship, collaboration and partnership in the ministry of all God's people."

In the annual meeting last May of the College of Anglican Bishops in Continental Europe, the bishops signed an open letter to this summer's Lambeth Conference of Anglican bishops from around the world requesting support and guidance.

A resolution from the 1968 Lambeth Conference "deplores the existence of parallel Anglican jurisdictions in Europe" and recommended "closer integration of existing ministries and congregations" with churches who are in full communion with the Anglicans. Implementation of the Porvoo Declaration last year established full communion between British Anglicans and the Nordic/Baltic Lutherans and Anglicans were already in full communion with the Old Catholics.

"We believe that ultimately the future of Anglicanism on mainland Europe can only be determined properly within the wider context of Anglicanism in Europe as a whole, including Great Britain and Ireland," the bishops said.

"The process of becoming a province cannot be hurried," the statement added. "It will require a gradual growing together of clergy and congregations..."

The development is a "natural progression," said the Rev. Patrick Mauney, the Episcopal Church's director of Anglican and Global Affairs, moving away from English-speaking chaplaincies to a new church with indigenous congregations. It comes at "an opportune time" because the bishops have "come together as a collegial body with a high level of personal trust." The primary challenge comes, he believes, in proceeding in "an ecumenically sensitive way, in full consultation with the ecumenical partners."



98-2134D

## Bethlehem meeting expresses 'outrage' at treatment of Palestinians

END) A final statement from an international theological conference in Bethlehem has expressed horror at what it said was the oppression experienced by Palestinians because of the Israeli occupation.

The statement, issued on February 14 by the Sabeel Liberation Theology Conference, also expressed deep concern over tensions in the Gulf.

More than 900 people--mainly Christians but also Jews and Muslims--from many parts of the world came to the Catholic-sponsored Bethlehem University to spend five days discussing their hopes that the biblical theme of jubilee might lead them to become "peacemakers promoting justice for all people."

Before the conference began, most participants had spent time travelling throughout the region. In the February 14 statement, they said they had met "local people in Galilee, Gaza, Hebron and Jerusalem" and had been "outraged and horrified at the level of oppression and brutality" they had observed as a result of the Israeli occupation.

The message pointed out that 1998 commemorated the 50th anniversary of the "dispossession of the Palestinian people" on the one hand and the establishment of the state of Israel on the other.

"While Israelis are planning festive celebrations to mark victories and accomplishments, Palestinians who continue to struggle for the cause of justice, peace and liberation, find themselves in the midst of a profoundly stalemated 'peace process' with a deeply frustrated hope of liberation," the message declared.

The participants pledged to accept "the challenge to practice perpetual jubilee" and to "articulate a new vision for peace, justice, security and coexistence" that, they said, would satisfy "the deepest needs of all God's people."

They spoke out against a "solution based on military might" or a "balance of power." These, the participants said, "inevitably favor the strong, and allow for racism, oppression and discrimination against the weak."

They insisted that "the benefits of God's jubilee are for all the inhabitants of this land, Israelis and Palestinians, Muslims, Jews and Christians."

The conference message identified ten steps that the vision of jubilee required in the region. These included an admission by the Israeli government that injustice had been inflicted on the Palestinian people. Participants also said the vision required the return of all Arab and Palestinian lands occupied after the war of 1967, and the right of return for the refugees who had been expelled.

In addition, the message called for a "guarantee of free access" to Jerusalem, which is regarded as sacred by the members of all three monotheistic religions. Most Muslim and Christian Palestinians are unable to visit the Dome of the Rock or the Church of the Holy Sepulchre because of closures imposed by Israel's military forces.

Participants in the conference concluded their message by calling for the "lifting of sanctions and the removal of the threat of military intervention against the suffering people of Iraq."



98-2130

## Church's decision makers launch new triennium at joint meeting in Minneapolis

By James Solheim

(ENS) The decision-makers of the Episcopal Church—members of all the committees, commissions, boards and agencies the guide the church between General Conventions—descended on Minneapolis in mid-March to launch the new triennium.

The apprehension that was apparent when these interim bodies met together for the first time in the fall of 1995 seemed to dissipate as participants plowed into their agendas with energy and good humor. By the final plenary it was obvious that some strong new bonds had been formed.

House of Deputies President Pamela Chinnis noted that, at the 1995 meeting, "the implicit threat of extinction posed by the Structure Commission's task overshadowed the event." Yet the changes adopted by last summer's General Convention, streamlining the structure, were not drastic and seemed to be well accepted.

During plenary sessions, participants met and engaged in conversation with the new presiding bishop, Frank Griswold. He and Chinnis moved among the individual meetings to get an overall feel for what was happening, visiting 15 of the 19 groups.

In expressing his own hopes for the meeting, Griswold said that "we can link all of our unique perspectives so that each of us has an enlarged viewpoint." The question is, he argued, is "how what we do reflects the Gospel and serves the church."

### Networking and bonding

In assessing the meeting at the final plenary, Griswold reported that he observed "good energy moving in the groups" and was impressed with the lively interaction. Yet he warned against unrealistic enthusiasm, cautioning everyone to "be modest."

Chinnis said that this meeting had a "totally different spirit" than the first one, adding that she was struck by the "great diversity and the caliber of membership" in the groups that she and Griswold visited. She noted "a lot of networking and bonding."

After each group made a brief report, Chinnis said in her final comments, "Having listened to report after report filled with fresh ideas and new approaches to the challenges we face as a community, I am filled with hope for the next stage of our journey." In the past, she said, "we have been a leadership which did its work and formed its recommendations in isolated clusters of dedicated and hard-working people who had little idea what each other was up to, and little ability to build on each other's work or modify disparate elements into a coherent whole."

While there may be "a certain euphoria" after such an intense experience, Chinnis warned that "there will be bumps along the way, missteps and mistaken directions and the occasional need to circle back and reestablish our points of reference."

In both her opening and closing comments, Chinnis said that "developments in telecommunications offer new ways to work," and that the church was finally moving to a point where it could "benefit from emerging communication technologies. In the new directory of interim body members, over 70 percent have indicated an electronic mail



address, making the flow of information much easier. A telecommunications team, under the direction of the Rev. Kris Lee of the national staff, visited 14 of the groups to outline some of the possibilities.

### **Reports reveal new energy**

As each of the committees and commission made reports in plenary, an overview of the church's commitments quickly emerged—and some fresh energy was obvious.

In a somewhat breathless but fervent presentation, for example, the Rev. LeeAnne Watkins of Minnesota said that the Standing Commission on Domestic Mission and Evangelism was urging the church to adopt a plan, "20/20: A Clear Vision," that would seek to double the church's baptized membership by the year 2020.

### **Among the other reports:**

■ The Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation committee said that its task is to strengthen its five networks, engage the church in Jubilee 2000 to fight oppression and seek debt forgiveness in the developing world.

■ Church in Small Communities will focus on small congregations, whether they are urban or rural.

■ Ministry Development is establishing five task groups to deal with ministry of the baptized and ordination process issues.

■ National Concerns is working with a broad mandate to develop policy, especially in areas such as end-of-life issues, biomedical ethics, health care, sexuality, work in contemporary society and pornography.

■ Structure will initiate a review process to look at recent changes, as well as the work of provinces, the composition of the House of Deputies and practical and canonical issues related to the transition process for presiding bishops.

■ World Mission will deal with the autonomy process for forming new provinces in the Anglican Communion, including one in Europe.

■ Program, Budget and Finance works with the Finance Committee of Executive Council to review the budget process in light of the goal to "reflect the mission of the church."

■ HIV/AIDS reminded the participants that "our church still has AIDS," pointing out that 120 Americans are dying every day and another 160 are diagnosed as HIV-positive.

■ Status of Women reported that they were working on an attempt to call the church to a new vision of itself as a safe, sacred, healthy place for all people.

■ Ecumenical Relations oversees 13 dialogues with other churches, as well as the relationship with the World and National Council of Churches. It is still dealing with the implications of the rejection last summer of the Concordat for full communion by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

■ Liturgy and Music offered a creative overview of its work, even including a rap number that asked Griswold and Chinnis, dubbed "Mama Bear and Papa Bear," where was the money for their tasks.

**--James Solheim is the Episcopal Church's director of news and information.**



98-2131

## Maine consecrates eighth female bishop in the Episcopal Church

by MaryLou Lavallee

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**by Ann Hafften**

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In the annual meeting last May of the College of Anglican Bishops in Continental Europe, the bishops signed an open letter to this summer's Lambeth Conference of Anglican bishops from around the world requesting support and guidance. The Old Catholic Churches and the Nordic and Baltic Lutherans, ecumenical partners in Europe, sent observers.

A resolution from the 1968 Lambeth Conference "deplores the existence of parallel Anglican jurisdictions in Europe" and recommended "closer integration of existing ministries and congregations" with churches who are in full communion with the Anglicans. Implementation of the Porvoo Declaration last year established full communion between British Anglicans and the Nordic/Baltic Lutherans and the Anglicans were already in full communion with the Old Catholics.

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**--James Solheim is the Episcopal Church's director of news and information. This article is based on reports from Nell Toensmann, press officer for the Convocation of American Churches in Europe.**

98-2134

## **Bethlehem meeting expresses 'outrage' at treatment of Palestinians**

**by J. Martin Bailey**

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Participants in the conference concluded their message by calling for the "lifting of sanctions and the removal of the threat of military intervention against the suffering people of Iraq."





## news briefs

98-2135

### **Australian Anglicans apologize for treatment of aborigines**

(ENS) The General Synod of the Anglican Church of Australia apologized to aborigines for the role the church played in the unjustified removal of children from their families. And it sought forgiveness from indigenous people for past silence on the issue, calling on church members to cooperate in implementing recommendations of a report, "Bringing Them Home." In addressing the removal issue, Archbishop of Brisbane Peter Hollingworth said, "Many acted on issues of squalor, poverty and homelessness. They believed if they didn't act children would die of malnutrition or other diseases," he said. The problems were well documented in the report and church and government leaders need to acknowledge the "tragic, dramatic dimension to this problem." Archbishop of Perth Peter Carnley said that every indigenous person in the country had been affected by the "genocide" since one in 10 males and three in 10 females who were removed from their families suffered abuse. "When we think about the stolen generations, we think about the hurts that are going through our lives," said Bishop Arthur Malcolm of North Queensland, an aborigine who discovered his real mother only 10 years ago. Aboriginal synod member Lenore Parker called on Anglicans to "listen to the stories of my people" and "get down on our knees and say to God that we are sorry," out of a sense of history, not out of guilt. "So that we can look directly into the face of an aboriginal person and say, I love you, please forgive me. I will walk with you. We are trying to walk with you, but our pains are so great." —Paul Osborne

### **Archbishop of Cape Town and Nelson Mandela clear the air on differences**

(ENI) In the wake of reports that President Nelson Mandela had criticized him in front of several bishops and other clergy, Archbishop of Cape Town Njongokulu Ndungane emerged from a recent meeting and expressed hopes that the air had been cleared and a spirit of reconciliation had been achieved. Ndungane has been critical of the slow progress in South Africa in meeting the needs of the poor. "The moral function of the state is to coordinate its resources in such a way so that all people had basic necessities, such as sufficient food, housing and shelter," the archbishop said after the meeting with Mandela. He added, however, that the church would maintain its stand of critical solidarity in its relationship with the government and would criticize its action when that seemed necessary.

## **Campaign links churches to arms trade investments**

(ENI) Fifteen dioceses in the Church of England have been linked by the Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT) to investments in companies that export armaments. In addition to the dioceses, where shares are held in the name of either the diocesan cathedrals or the diocesan boards of finance, two Church of England central funding bodies have also been linked by CAAT to arms-exporting companies. The Church Commissioners have more than \$50 million invested in two of Britain's leading arms-related companies, GEC and GKN, while CCLA Investment Management, formerly the church's Central Board of Finance, has invested more than \$24 million in the same two companies. The list has been published as part of CAAT's "Clean Investment Campaign," which seeks to persuade public bodies--especially local authorities, health authorities and religious organizations--to withdraw any investments they have in arms-exporting companies. Paul Flynn, a Labor Party member of the British Parliament and a long-standing campaigner against the arms trade, said churches should see themselves as "in a class of their own" in avoiding arms-related companies. "This is hardly the way to serve the prince of peace," he said. "Nor is it the church's responsibility to invest in the defense of the realm." A spokesperson for the Church Commissioners said, "We continually ask questions to satisfy ourselves about companies in sensitive areas, and defense-related production is not the main business of either GEC or GKN. In any case, production is mostly directed at supplying the UK armed forces and its NATO allies. We have no difficulty with the defense of the realm and peace-keeping activities."

## **Plan for a common Easter wins support from many churches**

(ENS) A proposal to end division between churches over the date of the most important of the most important annual Christian festival--Easter--has won strong support from some leading churches. It may be possible that from the year 2001 all the world's Christians will celebrate Easter together every year. Dr. Thomas Fitzgerald, an Orthodox priest, theologian and executive director of the Program for Unity and Renewal at the World Council of Churches (WCC), said that he was pleasantly surprised by the positive responses. It shows that many churches take the issue seriously, and recognize the value of proposals from the Aleppo meeting." The WCC held a meeting about the date of Easter in Aleppo, Syria, last year. Easter, the celebration marking the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, is usually celebrated on two different dates, one by most Protestants and Roman Catholics, the other by most Orthodox, along with some Protestants and Catholics. This year, for example, the dates for Easter are April 12 and April 19. The different datings are the result of disagreement over reform of the calendar by Pope Gregory XIII 400 years ago. The division about what is known as "the Paschal controversies" has prompted many discussions over the centuries, and especially in recent decades, at the highest level in churches. So far, no solution has been found. Representatives of the world's main Christian traditions at the Aleppo meeting agreed on a proposal for the churches to retain their current method of calculating the date of Easter, but using the most accurate astronomical techniques. This would help overcome the division. The proposal, which the WCC has described as "ingenious," calls upon all churches to follow the formula from the first ecumenical council of Nicaea, in the year



325, that "Easter should fall upon the Sunday following the vernal full moon." Fitzgerald said, "More accurate astronomical calculations could contribute to a solution. But it also depends upon the will of the churches to come to an agreement."

## **Russia's Baptists want same rights as Orthodox Church**

(ENI) Russia's Union of Evangelical Christian-Baptists--the country's biggest Protestant denomination--recently called on its members to promote further growth of the denomination and also demanded that Russian authorities give it the same respect as the nation's dominant Russian Orthodox Church. The union's 30<sup>th</sup> congress also called for peace among Russia's churches. They stressed the Russian history of their evangelical faith, and rejected the common perception that Russian Baptists belong to a "foreign" religion. Interest at the congress was focused on reactions to Russia's new Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations, which many people believe discriminates against the country's minority churches. But Pastor Pyotr Konovalchik, who was re-elected as the union's president during the congress, said that the law was not aimed at Russian Baptist churches and did not infringe on their freedom. "We do not see how we can be persecuted on the basis of this law," he said. However, he added that much would depend on the practice of re-registration of the communities, which was required by the new law.

## **Presiding Bishop's Fund gives nearly \$300,000 for emergencies**

(ENS) The Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief released \$283,000 in emergency relief funds during the first two and a half months of 1998 in response to a barrage of emergencies caused by drastic weather conditions and civil unrest. Distributed through local Episcopal and Anglican dioceses, the funds were used to respond to mud slides in Peru, ice storms in Maine, Vermont, New York, and Canada, tornadoes in Florida, floods in North Carolina, a typhoon in Guam, civil unrest in Rwanda, and famine in the Sudan. According to fund director Nan Marvel, the demand for emergency relief is quickly outstripping the fund's resources. "We need to hear from members of the Episcopal Church who understand the importance of church-based emergency relief in the early hours of a disaster. The fund has been able to express the compassionate concern of the church at large to individuals in their critical hour of need, but will need additional resources in the months ahead, not only for emergency response, but to answer the many requests for development grants that regularly come to the fund throughout the world." Contributions can be made to the fund by credit card by calling 800-334-7626, ext. 5129, or by check made payable to the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief, mail to: PBWFR, c/o Banker's Trust Company, P.O. Box 12043, Newark, NJ 07101.

## **Presbyterians ratify full communion with Lutherans**

(ENS) Eighty-eight presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., have voted as of March 11 to ratify an agreement declaring "full communion" between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and three churches of the Reformed tradition. An affirmative vote by a majority of the 172 presbyteries was the final hurdle to be crossed before the relationship was official. A festival worship service at Chicago's

Rockefeller Chapel on October 4 will formally declare the churches in full communion, bringing to a close 36 years of dialogues. Full communion is not a plan to merge; it commits the churches to sharing their mission to work locally and internationally and to develop procedures whereby clergy in one church body may serve as pastor in a church of another body. Assemblies of the ELCA and three Reformed churches--Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., Reformed Church in America and United Church of Christ--approved the "Formula of Agreement" for full communion in 1997. Presbyterian approval required ratification by a majority of the church's presbyteries on two amendments to the church's "Book of Order."

## **CWS endorses third world debt forgiveness campaign**

(ENS) Church World Service and Witness Unit of the National Council of Churches (CWS) recently endorsed Jubilee 2000, a worldwide movement to cancel international debt by the new millenium, calling on the U.S. government to use its leadership to support debt cancellation and on the NCC as a whole, along with its 34 member communions, to join the Jubilee 2000 campaign. The campaign, which is supported by a growing number of faith-based groups and non-governmental organizations, recalls the biblical concept of Jubilee--a time when slaves were set free, debts were cancelled, land returned to landless families, and a new beginning created for people whose lives had been degraded by indebtedness. "Jubilee symbolizes a fresh start for the poor and reestablishes justice and equity in the world," said Joan Harper, who chairs the Office of Justice and Peace of the Catholic Archdiocese of Los Angeles, one of the offices supporting the Jubilee 2000 campaign.

## **Zimbabwean churches call for a Christian nation**

(ENS) The Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) recently requested that President Robert Mugabe declare Zimbabwe a Christian nation. ZCC's general secretary Densen Mafinyane said that Zimbabwe needed to have "one religion which was official." He said that for Zimbabweans, "it would only be proper and logical to declare the nation a Christian country. Other countries have declared themselves Muslim countries, and why should we not be proud to declare our country a Christian nation?" Zimbabwe, which became independent in April 1980, is at present a secular nation with freedom of worship enshrined in the constitution. For most of Zimbabwe's 12 million citizens, Mafinyane said, indigenous religion was integrated with Christianity. He said that "harmonious" links between African religion and Christianity meant that it was inevitable that the nation would officially become a Christian state. The director of a leading Roman Catholic organization in Zimbabwe said that declaring Zimbabwe a Christian country would not be a true reflection of the religious affiliations of most Zimbabweans. "Traditional religion is still a strong force in the minds and hearts of the majority of Zimbabweans," said Mike Auret of the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace. "I think it would be very unfair to force Christianity on them."

## **WCC delegation visits Russian Orthodox Church**

(ENS) A World Council of Churches (WCC) delegation led by General Secretary Konrad Raiser, recently visited the Russian Orthodox Church to show support for the



Russian church's involvement in the WCC and in the ecumenical movement. The delegation traveled to Russia at the invitation of His Holiness Patriarch Alexis II of Moscow and All Russia, head of the Russian Orthodox Church. During the concluding encounter of the visit, Metropolitan Kyrill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad affirmed to the delegation the long-standing and continuing strong commitment of the Russian Orthodox Church to the WCC. He reminded the group of the existence of internal tensions and growing opposition to ecumenical involvement in Russia at this time, much of which was based on a lack of information and deliberate misinformation about the WCC. He noted, however, that a number of Orthodox churches continued to have fundamental questions about the direction, form and level of ecumenical cooperation of the Orthodox churches in the WCC. In reply, Raiser told Kyrill that he recognized the historic significance of the visit, which had allowed a timely, frank and open exchange about the concerns of the Russian Orthodox Church in the WCC. The visit had given the WCC a deeper understanding of the present situation of the Russian Orthodox Church and the nature of critical questions raised about its participation in the ecumenical movement.

## **Jerusalem meeting signals major religious breakthrough**

(ENS) At the end of their first meeting on March 23, the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem and Israel's two chief rabbis pledged action to help save the Middle East peace process and prevent the region from plunging into more violence. One of the chief rabbis also declared that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was not a religious conflict but a nationalist one. All three leaders condemned violence carried out in the name of religion. "What we say that we condemn violence," said Latin Patriarch Michel Sabah. "And so all religious leaders should have the same words to condemn violence, whether it comes from the Palestinians or the Israelis. All of us must know that the way to make peace is through peace. Security to the Israelis. Security to the Palestinians. Respect of dignity to the Israelis and to the Palestinians. With this, violence will stop." Rabbi Eliahu Bakshi Doron said, "It is very dangerous to see [the conflict in the Middle East] as a religious problem. The most serious attacks are done in the name of God or religious faith, but we have to show that this is not acceptable."

## **People**

**Marian Wright Edelman**, founder and president of the Children's Defense Fund, was installed as an honorary canon of the Cathedral Center of St. Paul by Bishop Frederick Borsch on Tuesday, March 24. Edelman received the title in recognition of her life-long crusade for children. The installation began a weeklong gathering of children's advocates from around the country: the March 26-28 annual conference of the Children's Defense Fund and the March 24-25 gathering especially for Episcopalians, "Our Church's Voice for Children."



## *news features*

98-2136

### **Gargoyles help Kansas parish extend its ministry**

**by Melodie Woerman**

For over 60 years gargoyles placed on the tower of St. Paul's Church in Kansas City, Kansas, have served as sentinels and protectors for the building. Now replicas of those gargoyles are helping the parish create a base of support to serve its changing neighborhood.

A plan created by the parish's rector, the Rev. Alan Tilson, will use funds provided by the northeast convocation to create a production studio to sell gargoyle statues throughout the United States.

Proceeds from the sales will be used to support outreach to the neighborhood, notably through the parish food pantry.

Tilson said his research has shown these are the only gargoyles on a church in the metropolitan Kansas City area.

He noted that while the statues are called gargoyles, these technically are grotesques, since they don't serve as water spouts as true gargoyles do.

He said he has discovered that gargoyles, which have been placed on church buildings for centuries, had a dual purpose.

"They served to keep danger away from the building," Tilson said. "They saved it from water damage, and the ugly image was intended to frighten away bad things, so people could be free to worship and live without fear."

#### **Perfect theology**

Tilson said the calling to turn fear into faith is "perfect theology for this area" of the city. He noted the neighborhood around the church, which once boasted grand homes of prominent citizens, now stands on a dividing line between deterioration and real violence.

"My first night in the rectory next door I counted 24 gunshots from midnight to 4:00 a.m.," Tilson said. "I decided right then that I could live with fear or with faith--and I chose faith. That's a metaphor for the whole Christian life and for the work we have to do here at St. Paul's."



### **Urban ministry plan**

The actual plan for creating gargoyle replicas came to Tilson during the middle of a night last fall.

While \$10,000 had been allocated to the northeast convocation during 1997 for use by St. Paul's for urban ministry, the parish had to come up with a plan for how to use the money.

Tilson said shortly before that he had met a local artist who makes bronze replicas of statues on the Country Club Plaza in Kansas City, Missouri.

"Then one night it all just came to me," Tilson said. "We could use the money to make gargoyle statues, and the profits from that would create more money to serve the needs of the community.

Tilson and parishioners who researched the possibility of producing the replicas came up with some surprising but supporting statistics--the collectibles business nets some \$9 billion annually, and gargoyles are the hottest selling item in statuary.

With only days before his meeting with the convocation, Tilson drew up a plan with projected cost figures and made his proposal.

Convocation president Jay Lehnertz said the convocation board was very supportive of St. Paul's plan.

"The idea of using the gargoyles was very imaginative," he said. "It provides a way to raise funds and capitalize on the architectural uniqueness of this church." He praised the parish for exploring its options so realistically.

### **Getting started**

Tilson contacted the local artist he had met, Paul McCovney, to see if he could create a replica of the large statues on the tower. Working only from photographs, McCovney carved a six-inch clay model of what has been dubbed the "grinning gargoyle."

From that model, a mold was made which will be used for creating more statues.

Tilson said the parish is in the process of converting a basement nursery area into a production studio. They plan to hire some minority members of the community to create the finished products.

The studio will be named in memory of the late Ana Riojas, a beloved member of the parish who died in 1996. Riojas worked in the community to provide minority business opportunities.

The six-inch replica will be offered in cement coated with a sealer for \$25 plus \$6 for shipping and handling.

### **Opportunity for ministry**

Tilson said the operation should be self-supporting in about a year, and after that proceeds will go to serve the needs of the neighborhood.

And those needs are growing. The food pantry, which has been in operation for 25 years, served twice as many people in January this year as it did a year ago.

Tilson said the project's goal of \$30,000, which should greatly increase its opportunity for outreach. The project has sparked other signs of new life in the parish. In the last three months 20 new members have joined, prompting Tilson to note, "God made

us through an act of creation, of growth. You have to be in a growth mode or you will die."

Tilson spoke with pride of another sign of hope. The church tower has a cross outlined on each of the four sides, which had been fitted with electric light bulbs. The lights hadn't worked in 25 years, but Tilson has corrected that and the lighted crosses stand out against a dark sky "as a beacon of hope to the community," he said. "We're trying to do something good in a place that has had too much bad news for too long."

*(For more information on ordering, contact the office at 913-321-3535 or 800-611-7184 for orders)*

98-2137

## Province I conference highlights community economic development

by Loren Gary

"Be good, and you will be lonesome," wrote Mark Twain. At the height of the Gilded Age, when he made this observation, socially responsible investing was almost unheard of. Surveying the economic landscape, Twain saw a rampant capitalism dominated by robber barons and hostile to the goal of building stable communities. Investing for social good, it seemed, was a lonely affair—something for dreamers, the softheaded and other marginalized people.

Nearly a century later, the concept of socially responsible investing still isn't the watchword of the day, but it has steadily gained acceptance. Indeed, as a recent gathering in New Hampshire made clear, it is no longer viewed as quixotic, and the credibility it enjoys owes much to the efforts of the Episcopal Church over the past 25 years.

The January 31 conference, entitled "Investing (Profitably) in Economic Justice," was held at St. Paul's School in Concord and drew more than 60 people from around New England, most involved with church-related finances or endowments. Sponsored by the Dioceses of Connecticut and New Hampshire and the Pelham Fund for Economic Justice—a joint project of the Episcopal City Mission and the Diocese of Massachusetts—the conference highlighted an array of opportunities for promoting the economic vitality and self-sufficiency of low-income communities.

### Taking the next steps

Amy Domini, the featured speaker, is a trustee at the Boston-based investment firm of Loring, Wolcott & Coolidge as well as a nationally recognized leader in the socially responsible investment movement. Her keynote address chronicled the Episcopal Church's involvement in the three arenas that constitute the field: shareholder responsibility lobbying, portfolio screening, and community economic development.



In the early 1970s, she noted, the socially responsible investment committee of the national church sponsored the first motions supporting equal employment opportunities and comparable pay that were filed at corporate shareholder meetings. Portfolio screening has traditionally entailed the refusal to invest in so-called "sin stocks"—tobacco, alcohol, and pornography companies—as well as in weapons manufacturers.

In 1986, the Episcopal Church took the notion of socially responsible investing a step further: assuming a leadership role in the anti-apartheid movement, the national church divested its endowment funds from South Africa. This record of faithful witness in the corporate world is something Episcopalians can be rightly proud of, Domini said.

But it was the third arena—community economic development—that received the most attention at the conference, largely because its potential for directly improving conditions that make for vibrant, stable communities is so great. Community economic development involves providing financial and technical assistance to vulnerable populations and alternative business structures that lack the long track record required by most traditional lenders. It comprises three main types of institution: banks committed to neighborhood revitalization; community development credit unions, 30-40 percent of whom are church-based; and community development loan funds.

The development loan funds work through intermediaries: they allocate their investment portfolios to a range of community loan funds, which, in turn, lend directly to "micro-enterprises," small business owners, and community nonprofits.

Several representatives of these intermediaries also spoke at the conference, describing how their operations help underserved populations. "Most of the risk that regular bankers worry about is not repayment risk—it's interest-rate risk," explained Julie Eades, president of the New Hampshire Community Loan Fund, where a tenth of the total capitalization has come from Episcopal sources. "But community loan funds get their money at a fixed rate, thereby freeing them to make loans that banks won't make because of their own profit restrictions, or can't make because of regulations," she said. "So it's not only how much you lend, but how you lend that is important. For example, our fund receives money from investors at a fixed rate—say, two to three percent—for an average term of two years."

### **Fairness and equity**

Community development loan funds have historically focused on providing affordable housing. In the past two decades, however, they have expanded into other areas, such as health care and small business development. One conference presenter, Clark Arrington, capital coordinator of Equal Exchange, a worker-owned coffee company, told how money from Episcopal sources in Connecticut, working through a financial intermediary, enabled the organization to get off the ground. "Is it possible to do business with a notion of fairness and equity to all—workers, suppliers, investors, and the earth alike? This was the question that we started Equal Exchange with. Last year, we did more than \$5 million in sales and paid our investors an eight-percent return—all while guaranteeing a minimum price to our growers, trading only with democratically organized cooperatives, providing incentives for organically grown coffee, and making pre-harvest financing available to the farmers."



Bishop Douglas E. Theuner of New Hampshire, one of the conference's organizers, urged investment managers of Episcopal organizations to make 5-10 percent of their endowment portfolios available to community development loan funds. In response to some investor worries that socially responsible investing is riskier than traditional approaches, Theuner noted that during the recession of the late 1980s, 18 New Hampshire banks failed—while the New Hampshire Community Loan Fund, with its portfolio of alternative investments, managed to survive.

"Society doesn't exist to serve the financial system's needs--the financial system exists to serve society's needs," Domini declared. "As enough investors grow to recognize this, the financial system can be made to better provide basic social necessities—food, clothing, shelter, health care, and communications. We need to help investment managers understand that their fiduciary responsibility goes beyond simply looking for the highest financial return, but even on this score the weight of the argument has begun to shift. In the future I believe we'll be able to argue that companies that are socially responsible are the ones that avoid problems, and that avoiding problems will improve returns."

**--Loren Gary is a freelance writer and editor based in Boston.**

98-2138

## **Religious leaders discuss development issues with the World Bank**

**By James Solheim**

(ENS) A high-level consultation in London between leaders of nine world faiths and top officials of the World Bank has agreed to establish working groups to discuss development issues, especially the heavy debt burden of the developing world.

Chaired by Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey and World Bank president James Wolfensohn, the dialogue included Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, Taoist, Baha'i leaders, as well as Anglican, Roman Catholic, Lutheran and Orthodox.

Many of the church leaders have been critical of the World Bank and its policies, accusing the bank of ignoring the views of the poor and imposing unrealistic and harmful demands for economic reforms on the countries it is trying to help.

"If we are wrong, let's admit it and deal with it," said Wolfensohn. "If we are not, let's get recognition for what we're doing." In acknowledging the seriousness of the dialogue, he said that world poverty was not decreasing and that the meeting had produced a "unity of concern" linking physical, spiritual and cultural development. The bank estimates that almost a quarter of the world's population lives in poverty.



The World Bank was established immediately after World War II to help raise living standards in developing countries, using loans funded by richer nations. The loans sometimes carry demands that the recipients reform their economies, provoking criticism from non-governmental organizations and churches. In the past Carey has attacked Western aid policies and said that Third World debt raised "sharp moral questions" and, in some cases, condemned countries to "a new form of slavery." In complying with the demands of the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund, "the burden is transferred to the very poor, who are crushed by the extra demands, and at a stroke isolated from a world community which is getting steadily richer."

The new working groups will deal with community building; hunger and food security; environmental sustainability; preservation of cultural heritage; violence and post-conflict reconstruction; and education and social services. The religious communities will also be invited to help prepare the bank's annual development reports.

At a press conference, Carey said that the success of the dialogue had been "the top-down approach of the World Bank meeting the bottom-up approach of the religious communities."

Both Carey and Wolfensohn were optimistic about cooperation in the future, raising hopes that the World Bank had made a decisive policy shift. They called the dialogue "historic" and Wolfensohn added that he is convinced that both sides would "enrich each other."

**--based on reports from Ecumenical News International.**

### **Photographs available in this issue of ENS:**

1. Church's decision makers launch new triennium at Minneapolis meeting (98-2130)
2. Chilton Knudsen consecrated as church's eighth female bishop (98-2131)
3. Maine consecrates church's eighth female bishop (98-2131)
4. Kansas parish making gargoyles to support ministry (98-2136)

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